

As a certified Interpreter for the Deaf, who sometimes works in VRS, I am very concerned about the change in rates that was enacted for VRS in July of this year. It is easy to see that the companies who provide VRS services are already scrambling, cutting hours, and increasing the demand on individual interpreters as a result of the cuts. We interpreters have to be careful not to develop carpal tunnel, on regular assignments. When we are interpreting for VRS, there is added strain on the back and eyes. Increasing the amount of work required from each interpreter in order to make a profit at the lower rates will only serve to increase the interpreter shortage by putting more and more interpreters out of the business.

Interpreters are highly skilled, specialized workers, and cannot be expected to work under the same conditions as CA's, or for the same amount of money. If the rates aren't returned to a more reasonable range, I suspect that many call centers will begin to hire cheaper, less experienced interpreters. If that happens, the Deaf community will be back to square one.

Please reconsider the rates. Thank you for your consideration.